

**PA13-10**

HB6502

Education	724-726, 789-794	9
House	2161-2165	5
Senate	1512-1513, 1582-1584	5
		<b>19</b>

**JOINT  
STANDING  
COMMITTEE  
HEARINGS**

**EDUCATION  
PART 3  
724 - 1073**

**2013**

MARSHA CATTANACH: Good afternoon, Senator Stillman, Representative Fleischmann and Members of the Education Committee. My name is Marsha Cattanach. I am presently a member of the Paraprofessional Advisory Council and have been since 2008.

I have been a kindergarten classroom instructional paraprofessional for 23 years, union building representative and treasurer.

I am here to speak on HB 6502, specifically asking to expand the membership and responsibilities of the Paraprofessional Advisory Council and to increase the number of paraprofessionals and allow the Council to bring pertinent issues other than professional development to the Commissioner's attention.

Right now we have five paraprofessionals on the Council. By increasing the number of paraprofessionals on the Council, we would get a much broader picture of what issues are facing our paraprofessionals in the state.

Classroom instructional paraprofessionals and special ed paraprofessionals have very different specific professional development needs. Are we meeting those needs and what districts are taking advantage of the many professional development opportunities being offered?

As drafted, HB 6502 fails to provide more paraprofessional representation. The language in a similar bill, HB 6183, which I have attached to my testimony, reflects the kind of change we need. I ask you to consider this language before taking action on HB 6502.

In addition to providing professional development advice, the Paraprofessional Advisory Council should be expanded to offer recommendations on staffing and other issues that impact the roles of paraprofessionals. HB 6502 would allow this.

An example and important issue facing paraprofessionals is their placement with special need students. Previously, paraprofessionals would be placed with special need students in one-to-one assignments per their student IEP.

The paraprofessional's responsibility would center on one student. Today as districts' budgets are reduced, paraprofessionals are no longer assigned to one-to-one positions. Rather, they are now adult support.

The adult support paraprofessional can be given any number of students, four to five special need students. Within the group of these assignments there can be students who are extremely violent and are runners who have run out of the building. This creates a dangerous situation for the student as well as the paraprofessional.

There needs to be limitations to the number of special need students assigned to any one paraprofessional.

Another concern is training. Time and time again, paraprofessionals are transferred to positions with absolutely no training prior to being placed with special need students. It is on the job training.

Paraprofessionals are being placed with students with autism who have never had any training in autism, and when the district

offers a workshop in autism it is severely inadequate, with paraprofessionals leaving the session more frustrated than when they went in.

Instead of sending paraprofessionals who are repeatedly being scratched and bitten for proper training, they are told to cut the tops and bottoms off of two-liter soda bottles and to wear them as sleeves over their arms.

These are just a few of the situations I would want our Commissioner to be aware of, and I would hope he would want to know about them.

We need to protect the children in our state when school districts do not. We need the Commissioner of Education to be aware of what is actually happening in our schools, and if allowed, with more paraprofessionals on the Council, the Paraprofessional Advisory Council's report would be our avenue to do this. Thank you.

SENATOR STILLMAN: Thank you very much. I'm looking at your testimony, and you prefer Proposed Bill 6183 but quickly, I can't. What's different with that one as opposed to what's in front of us, 6502?

MARSHA CATTANACH: I'm not, well, I'm really, I don't know the difference between the two. All I know is, my point is to put more paras on the Council. I don't know the other differences within the bill.

SENATOR STILLMAN: Okay. We'll have to figure that out. Questions anyone? Thank you.

MARSHA CATTANACH: Thank you.

SENATOR STILLMAN: Rhonda Evans, followed by Sarah Esty and than Bob Rath. Welcome, Rhonda.



Testimony of  
CEA  
Before the Education Committee

Submitted by Susan Heller Williams

**Connecticut Education  
Association**

**Governance**

Sheila Cohen, President  
Jeff Leake, Vice President  
Cheryl Prevost, Secretary  
Thomas Nicholas, Treasurer  
Kathy Flaherty, NEA Director  
Pat Jordan, NEA Director

**Executive Office**

Mark Waxenberg  
Executive Director

**Government Relations**

Vincent Loffredo, Director  
Capitol Place, Suite 500  
21 Oak Street  
Hartford, CT 06106-8001  
860-525-5641, 800-842-4316  
Fax: 860-725-6362  
www.cea.org

Affiliated with the  
National Education Association

**HB 6502 AN ACT CONCERNING THE SCHOOL PARAPROFESSIONAL ADVISORY  
COUNCIL**

Monday, March 4, 2013

Senator Stillman, Representative Fleischmann, Senator Boucher, Representative Ackert and members of the Education Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to express CEA's support of HB 6502 An Act Concerning The School Paraprofessional Advisory Council. Many classroom teachers rely on school paraprofessionals to support their work in their classrooms and with individual students who have unique needs.

The council was established by statute in 2007 as a result of universal recognition that the role of paraprofessionals was quickly evolving and their importance in the classroom growing. The act required the education commissioner to establish a paraprofessional advisory council made up of one representative from each of the statewide unions representing school paraprofessionals with instructional responsibilities. No other designees were named, nor were they prohibited. CEA supported the School Paraprofessional Advisory Council as originally envisioned, made up of school paraprofessionals. Over time, as the number of people on the council has grown, and the voice of paraprofessionals has been diminished.

CEA has long advocated for a teacher professional standards board with a majority of teachers. It is our belief that there is no expertise greater than that of those who do the work day to day. This philosophy holds true for school paraprofessionals as well.

CEA supports of HB 6502 An Act Concerning The School Paraprofessional Advisory Council with the changes suggested by AFT-CT, and asks that you pass the bill.



**TESTIMONY OF SHELLYE M. DAVIS, CO- PRESIDENT  
HARTFORD FEDERATION OF PARAPROFESSIONALS**

**HB BILL 6502**

**AN ACT CONCERNING THE SCHOOL PARAPROFESSIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL**

**EDUCATION COMMITTEE  
MONDAY, MARCH 4, 2013**

HB 6502

Good afternoon Senator Stillman, Representative Fleischmann and members of the Education Committee. I am Shellye M. Davis, a paraprofessional in the Hartford School District. I am also a President of the Hartford Federation of Paraprofessionals and a representative of the PSRP [Paraprofessionals and School-Related Personnel] division of the AFT and a member of the national Policy and Planning Committee of the PSRP. I am here today on behalf of AFT Connecticut's PSRP members to address HB 6502 and the necessity of amending Connecticut General Statute 10-155k.

As currently constituted, the Paraprofessional Advisory Council, established in 2007 by Connecticut General Statutes §10-155k, has 21 members, only a few of which are paraprofessionals. An advisory council on paraprofessionals should consist of a majority of paraprofessionals. Who else really knows the issues confronting these front line providers of speech and language services, special educational services, Kindergarten and classroom paraprofessionals? Over the years, the role of paraprofessionals has been changing and developing into one with more specialized knowledge about the needs and education of our students. In addition to providing an education for these children, we engage in continuing educational studies; we coordinate with teachers and with administrators; we even address our concerns directly to School Superintendents and Boards of Education. But even teachers, who share classroom space with us, often do not

fully understand our mission and how we fulfill it. For these reasons, our voice on the Council should be a stronger one. We are not asking that we be the only voice on the Council. We recognize that the insights of teachers and administrators provide valuable perspectives on our work as well. But we should constitute a majority of the members of the Council.

We appreciate your attention to this very important matter. However, as currently drafted, HB 6502 is improperly worded and fails to achieve the intended goal. It would actually decrease paraprofessional representation on the Council by designating one representative from each exclusive bargaining unit for certified employees. Paraprofessionals are not certified and of the two unions who represent certified employees, i.e. teachers, only AFT Connecticut also represents paraprofessionals. There are at least seven unions, including AFT Connecticut, that represent paraprofessionals. Each one of those unions should have a designated representative on the Council. The other members named in the bill are appropriate and should remain. The language in a similar bill, HB 6183, which I have attached to my testimony, reflects the changes I have suggested and would resolve the lack of paraprofessional representation on the Council.

We appreciate that HB 6502 would also allow the Council to address issues in addition to the ongoing professional development needs. By giving paraprofessionals a voice in recommended staffing policies and other issues that impact them in the workplace, you demonstrate a commitment to their success and the success of our students.

In summation, we urge you to amend HB 6502 to give paraprofessionals a majority voice on the Paraprofessional Advisory Council. We believe that this legislation will make for a more effective Council, and will advance the education of children in Connecticut. Thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.



General Assembly

*Proposed Bill No. 6183*

*January Session, 2013*

LCO No. 2074

Referred to Committee on EDUCATION

Introduced by:

REP. LEMAR, 96th Dist.

***AN ACT CONCERNING THE SCHOOL PARAPROFESSIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL.***

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

That section 10-155k of the general statutes be amended to (1) include in the membership of the School Paraprofessional Advisory Council (A) one paraprofessional appointed by (i) the American Federation of Teachers Connecticut, (ii) the American Federation of State County and Municipal Employees, Council 15, (iii) Municipal Employees Union Independent, (iv) Connecticut State Employees Association, and (v) United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers of America Local 222, (B) the person most recently awarded Paraprofessional of the Year award, (C) one teacher appointed by the Connecticut Education Association, (D) one teacher appointed by the American Federation of Teachers Connecticut, (E) two representatives from the regional educational service center appointed by the Commissioner of Education, and (F) a school administrator appointed by the Connecticut Federation of School Administrators; and (2) require the council to advise the Commissioner of Education, at least quarterly, of the needs for (A) professional development and training for paraprofessionals, (B) appropriate staffing strategies for paraprofessionals, and (C) other relevant issues relating to paraprofessionals.

***Statement of Purpose:***

To expand the membership and responsibilities of the School Paraprofessional Advisory Council.



Testimony of Marcia Cattanach, Paraprofessional  
Member, Paraprofessional Advisory Council

March 4, 2013

Education Committee

HB 6502 An Act Concerning Membership of the Paraprofessional Advisory Council

Good afternoon Senator Stillman, Representative Fleischmann and members of the Education Committee. My name is Marcia Cattanach. I am presently a member of the Paraprofessional Advisory Council and have been since 2008. I have been a Kindergarten Classroom Instructional Paraprofessional for 23 years, Union building representative and Treasurer. I am here to speak on HB 6502, specifically asking to expand the membership and responsibilities of the Paraprofessional Advisory Council and to increase the number of Paraprofessionals and allow the Council to bring pertinent issues other than professional development to the Commissioner's attention.

Right now we have 5 Paraprofessionals on the Council. By increasing the number of Paraprofessionals on the Council, we would get a much broader picture of what issues are facing our Paraprofessionals in the state. Classroom Instructional Paraprofessionals and Special Education Paraprofessionals have very different, specific professional development needs. Are we meeting those needs, and what districts are taking advantage of the many professional development opportunities being offered?

As drafted, HB 6502 fails to provide more Paraprofessional representation. The language in a similar bill, HB 6183, which I have attached to my testimony, reflects the kind of change we need. I ask you to consider this language before taking action on HB 6502.

In addition to providing professional development advice, the Paraprofessional Advisory Council should be expanded to offer recommendations on staffing and other issues that impact the roles of Paraprofessionals. HB 6502 would allow this. An example of an important issue facing Paraprofessionals is their placement with special needs students. Previously, Paraprofessionals would be placed with special needs students in 1 to 1 assignments, per their student's IEP. The Paraprofessional's responsibilities would center on one student. Today, as district budgets are reduced, Paraprofessionals are no longer assigned to 1 to 1 positions; rather they are now "Adult Support." The Adult Support Paraprofessional can be given any number of students – 4 to 5 special needs students. Within the group of these assignments, there can be students who are extremely violent, and are "runners" who have run out of the building. This creates a dangerous situation for the student as well as the Paraprofessional. There needs to be limitations to the number of special need students assigned to any one Paraprofessional.

Another concern is training. Time and time again Paraprofessionals are transferred to positions with absolutely no training **prior** to being placed with special Needs students. It is "on the job training". Paraprofessionals are being placed with students with Autism who have never had any training in Autism. And when the district offers a workshop in Autism, it is severely inadequate, with Paraprofessionals leaving the session more frustrated than when they went in. Instead of sending Paraprofessionals who are repeatedly being scratched and bitten for proper training, they are told to cut the tops and bottoms off of two 2 liter soda bottles, and place them over their arms.

These are just a few of the situations I would want our Commissioner to be aware of, and I would hope he would want to know about them. We need to protect the children in our state when school districts do not. We need the Commissioner of Education to be aware of what is actually happening in our schools. And if allowed, with more Paraprofessionals on the council, the Paraprofessional Advisory Council's report would be the avenue we need to do this.

Thank you,

Marcia Cattanach  
43 Denyelle Drive  
Rocky Hill, CT

**H - 1156**

**CONNECTICUT  
GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE**

**PROCEEDINGS  
2013**

**VOL.56  
PART 7  
2024 - 2369**

hac/gbr  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

212  
May 1, 2013

DEPUTY SPEAKER BERGER:

Have all the members voted? Have all the members  
voted?

Will the members please check the board to  
determine if your vote is properly cast.

If all the members have voted, the machine will  
be locked and the Clerk will take the tally.

Will the Clerk please announce the tally.

THE CLERK:

Bill Number 5117.

Total Number Voting 146

Necessary for Passage 74

Those voting Yea 146

Those voting Nay 0

Absent and not voting 4

DEPUTY SPEAKER BERGER:

The bill as amended passes.

Will the Clerk please call Calendar Number 169?

THE CLERK:

Yes, Mr. Speaker.

House Calendar 169, Favorable Report of Joint  
Standing Committee on EDUCATION, SUBSTITUTE HOUSE BILL  
6502, AN ACT CONCERNING THE MEMBERSHIP OF THE  
PARAPROFESSIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL.

hac/gbr  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

213  
May 1, 2013

DEPUTY SPEAKER BERGER:

Representative Fleischmann, the Esteemed House  
Chair of the Education Committee.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good to see you up  
there.

DEPUTY SPEAKER BERGER:

Good to see you Representative.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

I move acceptance of the Joint Committee's  
favorable report and passage of the bill.

DEPUTY SPEAKER BERGER:

Motion before the Chamber, acceptance of the  
Joint Committee's favorable report and passage of the  
bill.

Will you comment further, Representative?

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The bill before us, quite simply increased the  
prior number of paraprofessional members on the  
Paraprofessional Advisory Council and expands the  
Council's advisory role. It passed the Education  
Committee unanimously and I hope the whole Chamber  
will join me in supporting it today.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER BERGER:

Thank you, Representative.

Will you remark further on the bill before us?

Will you remark further on the bill before us?

Representative Ackert of the 8th.

REP. ACKERT (8th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

And as the Good Chair did mention, this is a very simple bill. It makes a lot of common sense, to be honest. Right now on the Paraprofessional Advisory Council, there is no paraprofessionals, so this makes it -- makes them part of the discussion. It also requires an additional reporting to the State Department of Education.

So I think, as we know, the paraprofessionals are such a value to the teachers and to our schools and our children, that this makes good common sense and should be a very simple yes vote.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER BERGER:

Thank you, Representative.

Will you remark further on the bill before us?

Will you remark further on the bill before us?

hac/gbr  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

215  
May 1, 2013

If not, will staff and guests please come to the Well of the House? Will the members please take your seats? The machine will be open.

THE CLERK:

The House of Representatives is voting by roll.

The House of Representative is voting by roll. Will members please return to the chamber immediately.

DEPUTY SPEAKER BERGER:

Have all the members voted? Have all the members voted?

Will the members please check the board to determine if your vote is properly cast.

If all the members have voted, the machine will be locked and the Clerk will take the tally.

Representative Genga, for what purpose do you rise?

REP. GENGA (10th):

Mr. -- Mr. Speaker, I rise for the purpose of asking to be included in the positive vote on this issue.

DEPUTY SPEAKER BERGER:

Representative Genga will be marked in the affirmative.

Thank you, Representative.

hac/gbr  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

216  
May 1, 2013

Will the Clerk please announce the tally.

THE CLERK:

Bill Number 6502.  
Total Number Voting 145  
Necessary for Passage 73  
Those voting Yea 145  
Those voting Nay 0  
Absent and not voting 5

DEPUTY SPEAKER BERGER:

The bill passes.

Will the Clerk please call Calendar Number 378?

THE CLERK:

House Calendar 378, favorable report of the Joint  
Standing Committee on HUMAN SERVICES, Substitute  
Senate Bill 853, AN ACT CONCERNING TECHNICAL AND OTHER  
REVISIONS TO STATUTES CONCERNING THE DEPARTMENT OF  
REHABILITATION SERVICES.

DEPUTY SPEAKER BERGER:

Representative Stallworth of the 126th, what  
purpose do you rise sir?

REP. STALLWORTH (126th):

Mr. Speaker, I move that acceptance of the Joint  
Committees favorable report and passage of the bill.

DEPUTY SPEAKER BERGER:

**S - 657**

**CONNECTICUT  
GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
SENATE**

**PROCEEDINGS  
2013**

**VOL. 56  
PART 6  
1512 - 1826**

ed/cd/gbr  
SENATE

212  
May 8, 2013

Yes, thank you.

Mr. President, if we could mark as the -- the next two items to be marked go, first is Calendar page 31, Calendar 502, House Bill 6502, from the Education Committee.

And, Mr. President, under "Matters Returned from Committee," Calendar page 44, Calendar 219, Senate Bill 999, also from the Education Committee.

THE CHAIR:

So ordered.

Mr. Clerk, if you'd call Calendar 502, on page 31.

THE CLERK:

Page 31, Calendar 502, Substitute for House Bill Number 6502, AN ACT CONCERNING THE MEMBERSHIP OF THE PARAPROFESSIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL, favorable report of the Committee on Education.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Stillman.

SENATOR STILLMAN:

Thank you, Mr. President. Pleasure to see you this evening.

I move the joint committee's favorable report and passage of the bill.

THE CHAIR:

The question before the Chamber is acceptance and passage.

Do you care to remark further?

SENATOR STILLMAN:

Yes, thank you, sir.

ed/cd/gbr  
SENATE

213  
May 8, 2013

This is a very simple bill, which just alters the membership and duties of the Paraprofessional Advisory Council by increasing the required number of paraprofessional members and expanding the council's advisement role. And the council does advise the Education commissioner on paraprofessional training needs.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, madam.

Will you remark further on the bill before us? Will you remark further?

Senator Stillman.

SENATOR STILLMAN:

Thank you.

If there is no objection, I'd like to place this on Consent Calendar.

THE CHAIR:

Is there objection to placing this item on the Consent?

Seeing none so ordered.

THE CLERK:

On page 44, Calendar 219, Substitute for Senate Bill Number 999, AN ACT CONCERNING THE TIMELY TRANSFER OF STUDENT RECORDS, favorable report of the Committee on Education.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Stillman.

SENATOR STILLMAN:

Thank you, Mr. President.

ed/cd/gbr  
SENATE

282  
May 8, 2013

Immediate roll call has been ordered in the Senate.  
Immediate roll call ordered in the Senate. Senators  
please return to the chamber.

THE CHAIR:

Have all members have voted. All members have voted,  
the machine will be closed.

Mr. Clerk, would you please call a tally.

THE CLERK:

Senate Bill Number 832, submitted by Senate "A"

Total Number Voting	36
Those voting Yea	<u>36</u>
Those voting Nay	0
Those absent and not voting	0

THE CHAIR:

Thank you.

Senator Looney, good evening, sir.

To the people in the chamber, can we keep their voices  
down. Senator Looney is going to speak.

SENATOR LOONEY:

Good evening, Madam President.

Madam President, I believe we had started a second  
Consent Calendar. If we could call the item or items  
on that because we will then be moving to another item  
as the order of the evening which will likely be our  
last item for the evening. So if we could call that  
second Consent Calendar?

THE CHAIR:

Thank you so much, Senator.

Mr. Clerk, will you please call the Consent Calendar?

THE CLERK:

ed/cd/gbr  
SENATE

001583  
283  
May 8, 2013

On page 31, Calendar 502, Substitute for House Bill  
Number 6502.

THE CHAIR:

I believe there were two on the Consent Calendar.

Senator Looney, is there one or two on the Consent Calendar? I apologize. I wasn't in the chamber.

SENATOR LOONEY:

Yes. Thank you, Madam President. Just ask -- it may just be the single item if the Clerk would just recheck. I knew there were either one or two but just to double-check.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Looney, there is only one that the Clerk has, sir.

SENATOR Looney:

Good. Then if we could move to a vote on that item, Madam President, before moving to the second order of the day?

THE CHAIR:

Okay. Thank you very much.

Mr. Clerk, would you call for the vote on the Consent Calendar, and I will open the machines.

Thank you.

THE CLERK:

Immediate roll call has been ordered in the Senate.  
Immediate roll call has been ordered in the Senate.  
Voting today's Consent Calendar Number 2.

THE CHAIR:

ed/cd/gbr  
SENATE

May 8, 2013

Have all members voted? All members have voted? The machine will be closed.

Mr. Clerk, will you please call a tally.

THE CLERK:

Consent Calendar Number 2

Total Number Voting	36
Those voting Yea	36
Those voting Nay	0
Those absent and not voting	0

THE CHAIR:

Consent Calendar passes.

Senator Looney.

SENATOR LOONEY:

Thank you, Madam President.

Madam President, I would ask the Clerk to call as the order of the evening under "Favorable Reports and Resolutions" on Calendar page 51, item previously marked passed temporarily now marking it go. That is calendar 421, House Joint Resolution Number 36.

If the Clerk would call that item?

THE CHAIR:

Mr. Clerk.

THE CLERK:

On page 51, Calendar 521, House Joint Resolution Number 36, RESOLUTION APPROVING AN AMENDMENT TO THE STATE CONSTITUTION TO GRANT INCREASED AUTHORITY TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY REGARDING ELECTION ADMINISTRATION.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Musto, good evening, sir.